

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0045
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 00920

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORC, PBOR, UNSC, US, ET, SO

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN COMPLAINT ABOUT YOUNG'S PRESS STATEMENT

1. ETHIOPIAN PERM REP MOHAMED HAMID IBRAHIM MARCH 13 SOUGHT A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO EXPRESS THE "DISPLEASURE" OF HIS GOVERNMENT ABOUT SOME RECENT STATEMENTS MADE BY YOUNG TO NEWSWEEK (FEBRUARY 27) AND OTHER JOURNALS. SAYING HE WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, HAMID DREW YOUNG'S ATTENTION TO HIS REPORTED REFERENCES TO THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME AS "BRUTAL" AND CONDUCTING "MASSACRES" AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE KILLINGS. HAMID SAID THAT WHILE MOST OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENTS ON THE HORN OF AFRICA HAVE CONTAINED CHARACTERIZATIONS WITH WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT COULD NOT AGREE, THEY HAVE RETAINED A CERTAIN BALANCE WHICH HAS SEEMED TO THE EPMG TO BE HELPFUL. THE STATEMENTS SUCH AS YOUNG WAS REPORTED TO HAVE MADE TO NEWSWEEK AND OTHERS, HOWEVER, SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE IN SOLVING THE ADMITTED PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE REGIME.

2. YOUNG NOTED HAMID'S OBSERVATIONS. HE SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF CREATING ILL FEELING, BUT HE FELT COMPELLED
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TO EXPRESS HIS REPUGNANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE IN ANY FORM. IF THE FACTS AS THEY ARE COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD IN THE US ARE INCORRECT, HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO BE CORRECTED.

3. SPEAKING MORE PERSONALLY, HAMID EXPLAINED THAT IN HIS REPORTING TO ADDIS ABABA HE HAD EMPHASIZED THE BALANCED NATURE OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENTS DURING A PERIOD

WHEN MEDIA TREATMENT OF ETHIOPIA WAS OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE. HIS PURPOSE WAS TO ENCOURAGE A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE A DIALOGUE WITH THE US. THE RECENT STATEMENTS TO WHICH HE HAD DRAWN YOUNG'S ATTENTION TENDED TO UNDERCUT HAMID'S EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH YOUNG'S REPUTATION AMONG THE ETHIOPIAN LEADERS.

4. HAMID RETURNED AGAIN TO HIS POINT THAT STATEMENTS CONDEMNING EVENTS OCCURRING IN ADDIS DO NOT HELP TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS THERE. THE REVOLUTIONARY REGIME FACES MANY PROBLEMS INTERNALLY WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO GAIN THE STABILITY NEEDED TO CONTINUE WORK ON PROGRAMS BENEFITING THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE.

5. REFERRING BRIEFLY TO TALK IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A SC MEETING ON THE HORN, HAMID STRONGLY DENIED THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR SUCH A MEETING OR AN APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE COUNCIL AT THIS JUNCTURE. HE DENIED THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT INTENDED RETRIBUTION AGAINST OGADEN RESIDENTS AND SPOKE OF THE POLICIES OF THE REGIME DIRECTED TOWARD THE RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. HE MENTIONED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY A SOMALI ETHNIC OGADENI HAD BEEN APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF HARRAR PROVINCE ONLY TO BE MURDERED AT GODE BY SOMALI INSURGENTS. YOUNG

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